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AUTHOR Dowd, James J.; LaRossa, Ralph
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ABSTRACT

Using a sample of 757 middle-aged and older residents of the Atlanta metropolitan region, the relationship between primary group contact and morale was investigated. With a control for sex and dependency, results indicated that: (1) interaction with children has a negative impact on the morale of dependent, older males; (2) visits with children and grandchildren are perceived by the dependent older male as a drama in which the ascending generations legitimize their claims to leadership through a gradual process of situation redefinition; and (3) one manifest result of having to cede control to middle-aged offspring is lower morale on the part of the older male. (Author)

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PRIMARY GROUP CONTACT AND ELDERLY MORALE: AN EXCHANGE/POWER ANALYSIS *

James J. Dowd **
University of Georgia
Ralph LaRossa ***
Georgia State University

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** Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30602

*** Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia 30303

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Contrary to what sometimes passes as conventional wisdom, old people do not, for the most part, live a life in isolation from their families. Although it is true that multigenerational households are not very common, cross-generational kin contact is far from rare. A number of studies, in fact, indicate that interaction among family members (particularly the contact of close kin like parents and children) is a routinized characteristic of everyday life in old age (Adams, 1968; Britton et al., 1961; Rosenberg, 1970; Sussman, 1965; Winch and Greer, 1968). In a large-scale study of old people in three industrialized societies, Shanas et al. (1968) reported that 84 per cent of the American respondents had seen at least one of their children the previous week.

It remains unclear, however, whether the frequency of family contact has any impact upon the quality of life of its older members. Some research has shown, contrary to expectations, that interaction with children has either no effect (Arling, 1976) or a negative impact on the morale of the older adult (Bell, 1976; Kerckhoff, 1966).

One explanation for these findings is that they are another example of the limitations inherent in the "sentimental" or "utopian" model of family life. Briefly, this model assumes that (1) the family is

necessarily and inevitably an arena of love and warmth, a retreat from the stresses and strains of the "outside" world; (2) interpersonal conflict is rare and undesirable in families; (3) status hierarchies and struggles for power are not relevant issues to family members; and (4) there exist "healthy" and "unhealthy" families which are empirically distinct and which, therefore, require separate explanations (Birdwhistell, 1966; Skolnick, 1978; Sprey, 1969).

The model appears to be more fanciful than real, however. As more studies succeed in probing beyond the idealized front that families create for outsiders, it has become obvious that families operate according to many of the same principles that apply in other social settings. Families are not "hiding places" where conflict and stratification lose their relevance. Quite the contrary, the family may be the best "natural laboratory" in which to observe these social processes on a small scale (cf., Kuhn, 1974). Marital interaction and child socialization provide numerous examples of how conflicts of interest are managed through exchange and coercion. Husbands "buy" their positions of power in the family by virtue of their generally superior incomes. Parents punish their children to convince them to conform (cf., Nye, 1978).

The relationship between the older family member and his or her middle-aged children may also be viewed as a process in which the relative power of the members determines the conditions of the exchange (Sussman, 1976; 1977). Income and health, for example, are critical resources, the lack of which places an individual in a disadvantageous, dependent status. Since old people generally possess fewer of these and other resources which are used as barter in the exchange process (Dowd, 1975), and since power is inversely related to dependency (Emerson, 1962; 1972), intergenerational relationships, including family ties, are often characterized by unbalanced exchange ratios.

A persistent dilemma in the everyday lives of old people is, in fact, the struggle to maintain a sense of independence and control in the face of lowered income and declining physical stamina. The older person who is unable to lead a relatively autonomous life is labelled in some settings "a poor dear," a person who needs to be "taken care of "(Hochschild, 1973; Mathews, 1976; 1977).

Rather than endure the embarrassment of humiliation that frequently accompanies an unbalanced social exchange, many people choose to withdraw or disengage from social interaction.[1] In the context of family relationships, however, an unbalanced exchange ratio

may persist due to the presumed "permanent" bond that exists among family members. Although "locked into" the kin network, many old people do in fact try to minimize the costs associated with dependency by insisting that they live apart from their children. But even visits from one's children may be problematic since they constitute occasions during which the older person's dependent status and inability to reciprocate meaningful rewards may become salient issues. Thus, the visit, though well-intentioned, may be a situation in which the older person's dependence emerges as a pivotal source of identity and which, as a result, actually serves to decrease the morale of the older person.

The objective of the present research is to directly address this issue by investigating the linkage between primary group interaction and morale with particular emphasis being given to the potential impact of dependency as a contingent or qualifier variable. By so doing, we empirically assess the relative importance of both family interaction and dependency on morale, an assessment that heretofore has not been made. Previous research in this area has been unable to make the necessary comparisons due to either inadequate statistical controls or insufficient sample heterogeneity (cf., Arling, 1976; Kerckhoff, 1966). We anticipate that interaction with children will have a positive effect on morale only for

those respondents who are able to retain a sense of autonomy and degree of control in their daily lives. Conversely, the morale of dependent older people will be negatively affected by primary group contact.

METHODS

Research Design

The data to be presented were collected as part of a larger study on socialization to old age. The sample consists of 920 residents of the Atlanta Metropolitan Area (Fulton, Dekalb, and Cobb Counties), aged 50 to 80. The communities in which interviews were conducted were selected with probabilities proportionate to size; to insure representativeness, the sample was weighted using an iterative approximation procedure. All interviews were conducted during the period April - July, 1977. Distribution of respondents in the sample by age, race, and sex is given in Table 1.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

For the present analysis, only those respondents with living children are included as the principal focus of the analysis is on frequency of family contact. This final subsample included 757 of the original 920 respondents.

Measurement

As indicated above, our objective is to investigate the possible specifying effects of dependency on the relationship between primary group contact and morale. These three major variables were measured as follows:

1. Dependency. Dependency is conceptualized as the lack of power resulting from inadequate exchange resources. More specifically, "The dependence of actor A upon actor B is (1) directly proportional to A's motivational investment in goals mediated by B, and (2) inversely proportional to the availability of those goals to A outside of the A-B relation" (Emerson, 1962:32). The measure of dependency used here was derived from a factor analysis of five indicators: perceived ill health, labor force marginality, receipt of financial aid from children, the lack of new friends, and a negative perception of grown children leaving the home.

Each of these measures are seen as, potentially, signs of the elderly's reliance on benefits mediated by his or her family and the unavailability of alternative (nonfamily) sources of support. Receiving financial aid from one's children is a direct measure of the older parent's dependence upon rewards supplied by their grown children. Poor health and labor force marginality (that is, unemployment or retirement) also

indicate a lack of exchange resources and a need to be "taken care of." Less directly, the presence of friends, particularly new friends, suggests an ability to cultivate alternate sources of the rewards generally supplied by one's children. Friends, simply, are resources, the lack of which narrows the possible range of reward sources. Indeed, without friends, the individual is almost certainly dependent upon either family relations and/or governmental assistance for the satisfaction of basic human needs. The final indicator of dependence is an attitudinal assessment of the relative degree of hardship that is imposed upon each generation when a grown child "leaves the nest." So, for example, the response that the parent suffers more than the child when the child leaves home is taken to indicate greater dependency or "motivational investment" than the opposite response.

Actual items, with factor loadings, are listed in Appendix A. The principal components analysis identified a single factor (with eigenvalue $>$ 1.00) underlying these five items. The dependency variable was constructed by summing the products of the factor-score coefficients and the individual's standardized score for the particular variable.[2] Dependency, as constructed here, has a potential range from a maximum of 1.97 to a minimum of -1.34. Respondents in the present sample were distributed widely

across this potential range with 19 respondents obtaining the lowest possible dependency score and two respondents obtaining the highest possible score. The mean dependency score in this sample was 0 with a standard deviation of 0.714.

2. Frequency of Primary Group Contact. This variable includes measures of the frequency with which the respondents see their children, grandchildren, and friends or neighbors. Separate questions were asked pertaining to each of these three referents. The form of the question was similar in each case and can be summarized as follows: "Generally, how often do you see any of your (grandchildren)? Do you see them daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, or less than that?" Additional codes were added to account for those who report seeing their family or friends "several times a week" or "several times a month."

The three variables measuring frequency of contact with children, grandchildren, and friends, each ranges from a low of <u>one</u> (sees the child, grandchild, or friend less than once a year) to <u>eight</u> (sees the person on a daily basis). If children, grandchildren, or friends were living in the same household as the respondent, the maximum code of eight was given. If the respondent reported variable levels of contact with two different children, for example, the code corresponding to the greater frequency of contact was given.

As with the dependency variable, there was considerable variation on each of the three variables measuring frequency of primary group contact, although the modal response pattern was clearly towards the higher end of the range. Frequency of contact with friends, for example, was at least weekly for over 85% of the sample; daily contact was reported by almost 50% of the sample (49.4%). For those respondents with children, 66.7% see them at least weekly and over one-fourth (27.8%) either live with their children or see them on a daily basis. For those with grandchildren, over half (56.8%) see them at least weekly and 18.3% either live with their grandchildren or see them daily.[3]

3. Morale. The measure of morale used in this research is a modified version of the Philadelphia Geriatric Center (PGC) Morale Scale (Lawton, 1975). The overall index was constructed by summing responses across 14 items, 13 of which were derived from the PGC scale.[4] This index has a possible range from zero to a maximum of 28. The mean morale score for respondents in this sample was 17.0 with a standard deviation of 5.42. This summary measure has an alpha reliability coefficient of .824. The actual items used to measure are listed in Appendix A.

Also entering the analysis as control variables are race, income, sex, and age. Because of the probability

that the effects of dependency are mediated by prior social learning, particularly the learning involved in socialization to specific age and sex roles, these latter two variables will be physically controlled throughout the analysis.

Analysis

The analysis is divided into two parts. The first part will present the results of a Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) in which mean morale scores were computed for each of the 24 categories formed by the classification of sex, age, frequency of primary group contact,[5] and dependency (2 x 2 x 2 x 3 = 24). The means reported in this section are net of the effects of income and race, which are statistically controlled through the MCA.

In addition to the MCA, we will present the results of an analysis of covariance (using multiple regression techniques) in which the effect of the interaction between dependency and primary group contact on morale will be tested for significance. Because we hypothesize that the effects of primary group contact on morale may be different for those who remain relatively independent in old age than for those who are less so, the problem for analysis is to test whether this hypothesized interaction effect is significant.

In order to test whether the effect of primary group contact on morale differs between one group (those

high on dependency) and another (those low on dependency), the dependency variable was subdivided into three groups ["low" (20%); "average" (60%); and "high (20%)].[6] The two extreme groups (low and high dependency) were entered into the regression equation as dummy variables; those in the middle dependency category (average dependency) constituted the base group. The full regression model to be tested is given by the following equation:

$$Y = A + B_1D_1 + B_2D_2 + B_3X + B_4(D_1X) + B_5(D_2X)$$

where
Y = morale
D_1 = low dependency
D_2 = high dependency
X = primary group contact

As indicated earlier, the primary group contact variable consisted of frequency of contact with children grandchildren, and friends (a separate regression equation was calculated for each). Also, because of the possible distorting effect of age and sex, the regression analysis was run individually for each of four age/sex groups: (1) males, 50 to 64; (2) females, 50 to 64; (3) males, 65 to 80; and (4) females, 65 to 80.

Finally, the measure of dependency used in this research was factor analyzed <u>separately</u> for each of the different age/sex categories. The purpose of this

procedure was to determine whether each of the five variables constituting dependency "loaded" similarly for the four groups.

RESULTS

Table 2 represents the results of the Multiple Classification Analysis. There are two important findings.

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

First, there is an unequivocal decline in morale with increased dependence. This is true across all categories of sex, age, and frequency of primary group contact. Secondly, the effect of increased dependency is not identical for all respondents. In some cases, dependency is mediated by the frequency of primary group contact. This is most evident with older (i.e., 65 to 80) men.

In this group, while increased dependency does indeed lower morale, it has a consistently more damaging impact upon the morale of those older males who are both highly dependent and who have frequent contact with family members, particularly children. For these older dependent males, increased contact lowers morale. The difference in morale between groups of older, dependent men with infrequent vs. frequent contact with their children is 5.36 (17.24 - 11.88), a difference that is

significant at .001. The same phenomenon occurs when one considers visits from grandchildren, although the difference in morale scores is somewhat less in this case. Considering contact with friends, there is no meaningful difference in morale between those older dependent men who report frequent (i.e., daily) contact with their friends and those who report less contact. This last finding is not difficult to understand (although admittedly contradictory of the major hypothesis of this paper) given that most friendships are age-graded (Hess, 1972) and, one would expect, "dependency-graded" as well.

For younger males, particularly those who are highly dependent, the effect of frequent contact with family members or friends is typically salutory. For females, regardless of age or dependency level, the effect of primary group contact is generally negligible, with one exception: for young grandmothers, frequent contact with grandchildren is associated with lower, not greater, morale.

Table 3 examines further the "dependency hypothesis" comparing regression analyses (the effects of frequency of contact with children, grandchildren, and friends were estimated separately) for four different age/sex categories.

TABLES 3a AND 3b ABOUT HERE

Frequency of primary group contact (X_1) and low dependency (X_2) are both largely unrelated to morale. High dependency (X_3), however, reflects certain age differences. Whereas for the younger males low dependency is unrelated to morale, the effect of high dependency is significantly negative. Also, whereas for older females low dependency is unrelated to morale, the effect of high dependency is significantly negative. The effect of high dependency on morale is also different for older males than for the other age/sex groups. Whereas for the younger males and the younger and older females X_3 is negative, for the older males it is positive, though not significantly. These main effects should, however, not be given prolonged consideration because of the significant interaction effects between primary group contact, dependency, and morale.

These interaction effects appear in Table 3 as X_4 (contact/low dependency) and X_5 (contact/high dependency). The first interaction term, X_4, is consistently ineffective in explaining any of the variance of morale. Thus we can conclude that not only is frequency of primary group contact unrelated with morale for the "average" respondent (X_1), but also it has little or no effect on morale for those respondents, both male and female, who are <u>low</u> on dependency (or, in other words, for those who are relatively independent).

The same is not true, however, for the second interaction term (X_5), the effect of primary group contact on morale for those respondents who are in the upper 20% of the distribution of dependency scores. That is, it is not true for the men in this category. For males, not only does the interaction of primary group contact and high dependency have a significant impact on morale but also the direction of the interaction effect is consistently different between age groups. For dependent <u>older</u> men, contact with family or friends <u>decreases</u> morale. The opposite is true for dependent, middle-aged men. This contrast is graphically depicted in Figures 1 - 4. In these figures, the significant interaction of contact with children and dependency for men is indicated by the lack of a common

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FIGURES 1 - 4 ABOUT HERE

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slope among the three least-squares solutions. The negative effect of primary group contact on the morale of highly dependent older men, for example, is clearly evident by the downward sloping regression estimate in Figure 4.

The estimates for women are also presented to provide a point of contrast. The absence of significant

interaction effects for females is indicated by the relatively greater commonality among slopes.

One vexing issue remains, namely, why is the interaction of high contact/high dependency so deleterious to the morale of older males but not, say, to the morale of younger males. Although the fact of age is certainly implicated here, another plausible answer lies in the differing meanings that dependency may carry for each age group. To test this possibility, the measure of dependency was factor analyzed separately for each of the four age/sex categories. The intent of this procedure is to determine whether each of the five variables constituting dependency "loaded" similarly for each of the groups. These results are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

From these data, it becomes apparent that the meaning of dependency may well be different for the different age/sex segments within the sample. The dependency of middle-aged males (aged 50-64) is largely a function of poor health, as evidenced by a factor score coefficient (fsc) of this component of .649. The only other component variable of dependency with a coefficient greater than .20 within this sample segment is labor force marginality (.233). For older males (aged 65-80), however,

the contribution of poor health to dependency is much lower (fsc = .187) while that of labor force marginality is proportionately much higher (.454).

The definition of dependency assumes still other forms for middle-aged and older women. For women, the contribution of labor force marginality to the dependency measure varies considerably by age. The effect for the middle-aged women is much like that for older men, i.e., labor force marginality is the single most significant contributor to dependency. For older women, however, labor force marginality is completely unrelated to dependency. Instead, the meaning of dependency for older women centers around poor health and, to a lesser degree, around the receipt of financial help from their children.

DISCUSSION

The MCA and regression analysis indicate that the nature of intergenerational family ties varies considerably depending upon existing power/dependence relationships among the members. The factor analysis of the dependency measure, however, suggests that existing power/dependence relationships in the family only become salient when routinized role performance is seriously jeopardized.

These findings hold significant implications for the dependency hypothesis. For middle-aged men and older women, the two groups for which perceived ill

health was the core determinant of dependency, the effect of frequent contact with family members for the high dependent respondents was consistently associated with higher morale. Since dependency in these two cases is physically, not socially, defined, existing social relationships and role expectations within the family may not be jeopardized. Frequent visits from family members to a physically handicapped parent or grandparent may be more likely to be perceived by the dependent individual as necessary and helpful and, consequently, are probably appreciated. Visits from family are especially significant for the middle-aged man who is highly dependent. With only infrequent visits from children, for example, the life satisfaction score of these men is an almost minimal 9.8. With frequent visits from children, however, the corresponding score is a significantly higher 14.5. Similar differences are evident as well with the grandchildren.

Among older males, the sample segment for which the loading of perceived ill health on morale is lowest, primary group contact has a negative effect on morale, an effect directly opposite to that described above for middle-aged men and older women. For older men, dependency is principally a function of labor force marginality, not poor health; consequently, dependency is being defined more in social terms than in physical.

Whereas, a person in poor health generally is not held "responsible" for their condition, an unemployed person frequently is considered to be at least partially "at fault." For the unemployed, then, social interaction may reasonably be expected to damage morale if it is a series of occasions during which a negative, unwanted identity or deviant label is imposed and maintained.

The social interaction between generations may be understood as a devolution of authority from the now-retired older worker to his middle-aged successor. A significant event in this process of succession is retirement. The onset of labor force retirement serves to symbolize a simultaneous shift in role definitions within the family. The former worker's privileged status as "breadwinner" no longer applies. In fact, since men in this society principally secure and maintain their adult status by working (Rossi, 1968), retirement (and associated income loss) removes an important source of the male's power within the family. Consequently, his claim to his former position of "head of household" becomes tenuous and increasingly difficult to legitimate. Frequent visits from his grown children may, in fact, constitute occasions during which a ritual of "ceding control" is worked out (Gross and Stone, 1964; Lemert, 1962; Lindesmith, et al., 1977). In other words, occupational retirement may precipitate a family drama

in which the middle aged ("ascending") generation assumes leadership through a gradual process of redefining the former "provider" as non-productive and, therefore, dependent. That this process is not entered into voluntarily by the older male is evidenced by the negative association of morale with primary group contact.

The fourth sample segment considered here are the women aged 50-64. For this group both labor force marginality and perceived ill health contribute significantly to the definition of dependency. Given this finding, the inconsistency of the dependency effect observed for middle-aged women (in Table 3) becomes less of an anomaly. In Table 3, the effect of primary group contact for high dependent middle aged women differed between Equation 1 (where frequent contact with children was positively though not significantly associated with morale) and Equation 2 (where frequent contact with grandchildren was negatively associated with morale). Any explanation of this finding at this time would be highly speculative and, consequently, will not be attempted. However, future research on the effects of the family contact on the morale of middle-aged women would contribute to our understanding in this area by asking two related questions: (1) Is the effect on morale of contact with children qualitatively different (i.e., directed differently) from that of contact with

grandchildren; and (2) are labor force marginality and/or poor health of middle-aged women significant factors in explaining this difference?

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Using a sample of 748 middle-aged and older residents of the Atlanta mentropolitan region, the relationships between primary group contact and morale was analyzed. The hypothesis to be tested in the research was that the effect of primary group contact on morale varies depending upon the relative power (and, consequently, relative dependency) among the generations. The data reported here partially supports this conclusion as frequency of primary group contact was found to be negatively correlated with morale among dependent older males but not among older males who were relatively independent. In addition, however, primary group contact was found to have a positive effect on the morale of dependent middle-aged males and dependent older women.

These findings were explained in terms of the power-dependence relationships that exist within families. It was argued that social interaction affects morale negatively during periods in which existing role relationships and associated exchange ratios become salient issues and, hence, are vulnerable to renegotiation. It was observed that the morale of dependent older males

who reported frequent contact with children and grandchildren was significantly lower than the morale of those reporting only infrequent family contact. Considering that the dependency of males in this age range was defined in large part by labor force status, it was argued that visits with children and grandchildren are perceived by the older person as a drama in which the ascending generations legitimate their claim to leadership through a gradual process of situation redifinition. The older male, lacking the power formerly possessed as "breadwinner," is forced to comply with his children's tacit suggestions that their roles be reversed. One manifest result of "ceding control" to his middle-aged offspring is a lower life satisfaction for the older male.

Whether this relationship between dependency, primary group contact, and morale holds in other areas is, of course, an empirical question. However, following the lead of those who have examined marital power in a cross-cultural context (Rodman, 1967; 1972), we would hypothesize that normative prescriptions for age stratification specify or qualify the effect that socioeconomic dependency has on power. Specifically, the more equalitarian the norms governing power relations in age-heterogeneous situations, the stronger the positive relationship between socioeconomic status (as a resource) and power.

Table 1. Sample respondents by age, race, and sex.

SEX	RACE	AGE 50-64	AGE 65-80	TOTAL
MALE	White	162 (141)	137 (108)	299 (249)
	Non-White	27 (24)	26 (21)	53 (45)
FEMALE	White	195 (173)	223 (183)	418 (356)
	Non-White	71 (61)	63 (46)	134 (107)
TOTAL		455 (385)	449 (372)	904* (757)**

* 16 respondents either refused or were unable to answer the question asking date of birth.

** Figures in parentheses indicate the number of respondents in each category who had children and who, therefore, actually entered the major analysis.

TABLE 2. Morale by Primary Group Support, Dependency, and Age/Sex Status.

AGE-SEX STATUS	LEVEL OF PRIMARY GROUP CONTACT	EQUATION 1: CHILDREN Dependency Low	Mid	High	EQUATION 2: GRANDCHILDREN Dependency Low	Mid	High	EQUATION 3: FRIENDS Dependency Low	Mid	High
1. Men 50-64	Infrequent	18.80 (30)	18.80 (19)	9.80 (12)	19.72 (19)	19.11 (18)	10.72 (16)	19.31 (27)	18.25 (20)	11.49 (19)
	Frequent	20.04 (40)	17.52 (32)	14.52 (30)	19.43 (51)	17.39 (33)	14.68 (26)	19.64 (43)	17.84 (31)	13.55 (23)
	F - Test	N.S.	N.S.	$p<.02$	N.S.	$p<.10$	$p<.03$	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
2. Women 50-64	Infrequent	17.82 (25)	18.55 (42)	11.78 (14)	18.52 (20)	19.01 (35)	16.80 (17)	19.16 (21)	18.31 (57)	13.97 (23)
	Frequent	20.28 (23)	17.67 (55)	15.00 (35)	19.34 (28)	17.51 (62)	12.13 (32)	18.87 (27)	17.68 (40)	14.18 (26)
	F - Test	$p<.10$	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	$p<.05$	$p<.10$	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
3. Men 65-80	Infrequent	19.57 (12)	18.12 (19)	17.24 (17)	19.30 (9)	16.06 (22)	15.91 (18)	18.74 (12)	17.30 (28)	13.74 (19)
	Frequent	19.31 (7)	17.55 (45)	11.88 (25)	19.62 (10)	18.59 (42)	12.66 (24)	20.72 (7)	18.04 (36)	14.29 (23)
	F - Test	N.S.	N.S.	$p<.001$	N.S.	$p<.05$	$p<.05$	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
4. Women 65-80	Infrequent	20.37 (11)	17.46 (40)	12.62 (24)	19.94 (9)	18.15 (42)	11.75 (28)	20.25 (15)	17.23 (53)	13.82 (37)
	Frequent	20.30 (13)	17.33 (61)	14.48 (48)	20.56 (15)	16.83 (59)	15.21 (44)	20.47 (9)	17.55 (48)	13.90 (35)
	F - Test	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	$p<.02$	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.

TABLE 3a. Regression coefficients[a] from final equation estimating the effects of frequency of primary group contact, dependency, and the interaction terms on morale - Men.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE	EQUATION 1: CHILDREN		EQUATION 2: GRANDCHILDREN		EQUATION 3: FRIENDS	
	50-64	65-80	50-64	65-80	50-64	65-80
X_1 Frequency of Contact	-0.13 (-0.32) N.S.	-0.02 (-0.03) N.S.	-0.23 (-0.56) p<.10	0.11 (0.26) N.S.	-0.12 (-0.45) N.S.	0.14 (0.51) N.S.
X_2 Low Dependency	-0.15 (-1.64) N.S.	0.16 (2.30) N.S.	-0.06 (-0.65) N.S.	0.36 (5.56) p<.10	-0.25 (-2.61) N.S.	0.08 (1.14) N.S.
X_3 High Dependency	-1.00 (-12.52) p<.001	0.42 (4.73) p<.10	-1.25 (-15.34) p<.001	0.22 (2.44) N.S.	-1.51 (-17.85) p<.001	0.35 (3.89) N.S.
X_4 Interaction X_1X_2	0.26 (0.43) N.S.	-0.02 (-0.05) N.S.	0.13 (0.24) N.S.	-0.25 (-0.68) N.S.	0.39 (0.58) N.S.	0.05 (0.10) N.S.
X_5 Interaction X_1X_3	0.59 (1.06) p<.10	-0.83 (-1.40) p<.001	0.80 (1.53) p<.01	-0.58 (-1.05) p<.10	1.19 (1.96) p<.01	-0.75 (-1.11) p<.10
CONSTANT	20.46	17.83	22.01	15.98	21.29	14.32
R^2	.278	.277	.375	.181	.229	.200
N	161	131	117	116	185	161

[a]Standardized beta coefficients; unstandardized regression coefficients in parentheses.

TABLE 3b. Regression coefficients[a] from final equation estimating the effects of frequency of primary group contact, dependency, and the interaction terms on morale - Women.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE	EQUATION 1: CHILDREN		EQUATION 2: GRANDCHILDREN		EQUATION 3: FRIENDS	
	50-64	65-80	50-64	65-80	50-64	65-80
X_1 Frequency of Contact	-0.05 (-0.13) N.S.	-0.08 (-0.23) N.S.	-0.01 (-0.02) N.S.	-0.07 (-0.17) N.S.	-0.10 (-0.35) N.S.	0.04 (0.15) N.S.
X_2 Low Dependency	-0.11 (-1.32) N.S.	0.08 (1.40) N.S.	-0.03 (0.44) N.S.	0.02 (0.32) N.S.	-0.26 (-3.21) N.S.	0.25 (4.30) N.S.
X_3 High Dependency	-0.45 (-5.50) $p<.10$	-0.50 (-6.07) $p<.01$	-0.26 (-3.12) N.S.	-0.64 (-7.65) $p<.001$	-0.43 (-5.25) N.S.	-0.46 (-5.48) $p<.10$
X_4 Interaction X_1X_2	0.20 (0.38) N.S.	0.10 (0.28) N.S.	0.12 (0.26) N.S.	0.13 (0.37) N.S.	0.40 (0.69) N.S.	-0.08 (-0.19) N.S.
X_5 Interaction X_1X_3	0.09 (0.16) N.S.	0.10 (0.19) N.S.	-0.11 (-0.21) N.S.	0.19 (0.36) N.S.	0.11 (0.19) N.S.	0.11 (0.19) N.S.
CONSTANT	19.30	18.92	18.59	18.96	20.38	16.65
R^2	.165	.242	.162	.286	.154	.205
N	230	227	189	210	264	285

[a]Standardized beta coefficients; unstandardized regression coefficients in parentheses.

TABLE 4. Sub-Sample Comparisons of Dependency Factor Scores.

COMPONENT VARIABLES	SAMPLE SEGMENTS Men, 50-64	Men, 65-80	Women, 50.64	Women, 65-80
1. Perceived Ill Health	.808 (.649)[a]	.293 (.137)	.517 (.358)	.538 (.476)
2. Labor Force Marginality	.564 (.233)	.523 (.454)	.617 (.495)	.006 (-.057)
3. Financial Aid From Children	.124 (.039)	.098 (.052)	.119 (.031)	.337 (.249)
4. No New Friends	.400 (.134)	.278 (.193)	.054 (.005)	.287 (.173)
5. Negative View of "Empty Nest"	.164 (.042)	-.021 (-.055)	.036 (-.063)	.035 (-.015)

[a] Figures in parentheses represent factor-score coefficients while those figures without parentheses are the loadings derived from a varimax rotated factor matrix.

Figure 1. Relationship between Primary Group Contact and Morale for Various Levels of Dependency (Women, Aged 50-64)

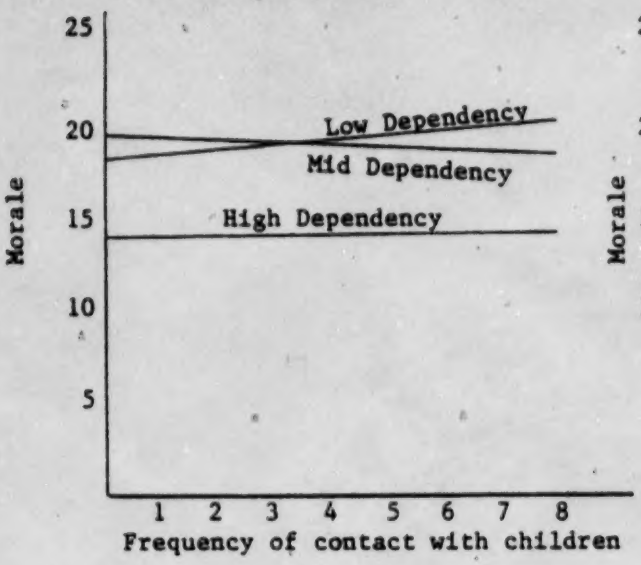


Figure 1. Relationship between Primary Group Contact and Morale for Various Levels of Dependency (Men, Aged 50-64)

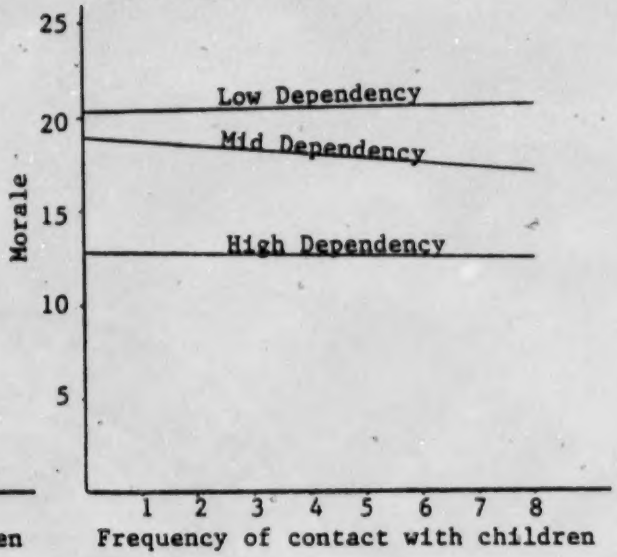


Figure 3. Relationship between Primary Group Contact and Morale for Various Levels of Dependency (Men, Aged 50-64)

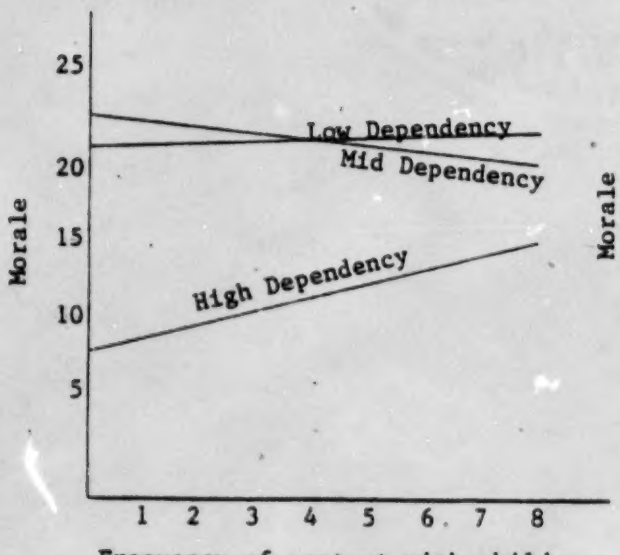
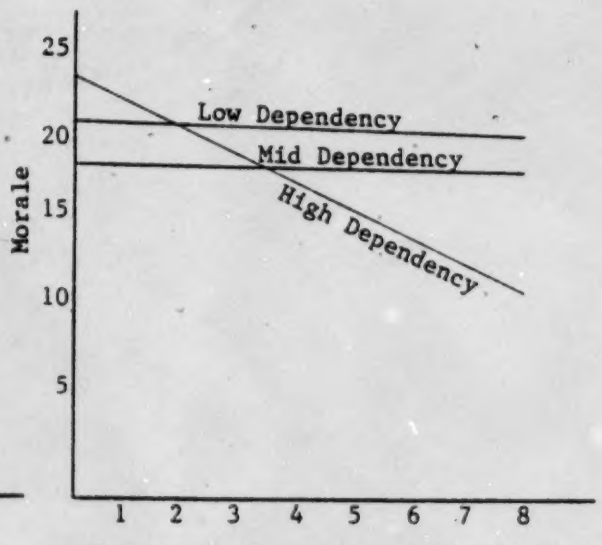


Figure 4. Relationship between Primary Group Contact and Morale for Various Levels of Dependency (Men, Aged 65-80)



FOOTNOTES

1. Sarah Mathews (1976), in her perceptive essay on elderly widows, defines this tactic of leaving the field of social interaction as "negotiation by default."
2. Factor scores are calculated by the formula

   $f_i = fsc_{1i}z_1 + fsc_{2i}z_2 + \ldots fsc_{ni}z_n$

   Where "fsc_{ji}" is the factor score coefficient for variable j and factor i and "z_i" is the respondent's standardized score on variable j (Kim, 1975).
3. Previous research that has attempted to assess levels of intergenerational relations with measures of frequency of contact similar to those used here has been justly criticized for its failure to consider telephone communication as a viable means of contact. In the present research telephone communication was omitted from the measure of frequency of contact only because we wished to focus directly on the effects of face-to-face contact on morale. The question of whether telephone contact may also have a variable effect on morale for different categories of dependency is a legitimate research question but one which we are unable to answer in this paper. It should be noted, however, the estimates of primary group contact obtained from the present sample using the measures of face-to-face contact, (excluding telephone contact), while certainly lower than those

derived from measures that include telephone calls in addition to face-to-face contact, are quite high nonetheless. It is very unlikely, then, that the estimates of contact used here underestimate in any significant sense the amount of contact one would observe if the measure specified either telephone communication or face-to-face contact.

4. Three of the 17 PCG scale items were dropped primarily due to redundancy ("I take things hard," "Little things bother me more this year," or "As I get older, things are better/worse than I thought they would be"). Some of the items that are included on our revised index sufficiently approximate the deleted items so as to warrant the shortened version (for example, "Things keep getting worse as I get older"). A fourth item ("I see enough of my friends and relatives") was also dropped since primary group contact (including contact with friends and relatives) is the major independent variable in this analysis.

5. For this analysis, primary group contact was dichotomized into categories of "frequent" (at least weekly contact for children and grandchildren, or at least several times a week for friends) and "infrequent" (less than weekly for children and grandchildren, or less than several times a week for friends). The decision as to what constitutes appropriate cutting points between "frequent" and "infrequent"

primary group contact was based on empirical as well as common-sense criteria. The distribution of responses on the measures of frequency of contact used here clustered around weekly contact with children and grandchildren but daily contact with friends.

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APPENDIX: VARIABLES

1. Dependency

The individual variables comprising the dependency measure include the following five interview questions:

A. Poor health: "In general, would you say your health is - -

(1) very good; (2) good; (3) fair; (4) poor: or (5) very poor?"

B. Labor force martinality. This variable was constructed in response to a standard question asking current employment status. In order to place the respondent on a continuum measuring degree of marginality to the labor force, responses to the current employment question were grouped and coded as follows: Not working but either unemployed or retired (2); Homemaker or working part-time (1); working full-time (0).

C. Financial assistance from children: "In the past year, have you received any financial assistance from any of your children?" Yes (1); No (0).

D. Lack of new friends: "Have you made any new friends in the last two years?" Yes (1); No (0).

E. Perception of parental loss due to empty nest: "Parents are the ones who suffer most when children move away." Agree (2); Undecided (1); Disagree(0).

The loadings of these variables on the dependency factor (varimax rotation) are as follows:

Variable	Factor Loading
a. Poor health	.635
b. Labor force marginality	.421
c. Financial assistance	.177
d. Lack of new friends	.264
e. Perception of parental loss	.229

2. Morale. The 14 items are as follows:

   a. I have a lot to be sad about.

   b. I sometimes feel that life isn't worth living.

   c. I sometimes worry so much that I can't sleep.

   d. I am afraid of a lot of things.

   e. I feel bored now more than I used to.

   f. I get upset easily.

   g. Things keep getting worse as I get older.

   h. I have as much pep as I did last year.

   i. As you get older you are less useful.

   j. Life is hard for me most of the time.

   k. I get mad more than I used to.

   l. I am as happy now as when I was younger.

   m. Do you often feel lonely?

   n. Are you satisfied with your life today?

Items were coded such that a response indicating high morale was scored 2; a "depends" response was scored 1; and a response indicating low morale was scored 0.